

INTRODUCTION

You don't need to spend a fortune to get a decent notebook computer for email and office work. Spend £500 wisely and you could get a basic family PC that's easy to fold up and tidy away, but you won't be able to play games, store a large library of music or record TV programmes. Spending more will get you a better computer, but how big a budget do you need to get the features you want?

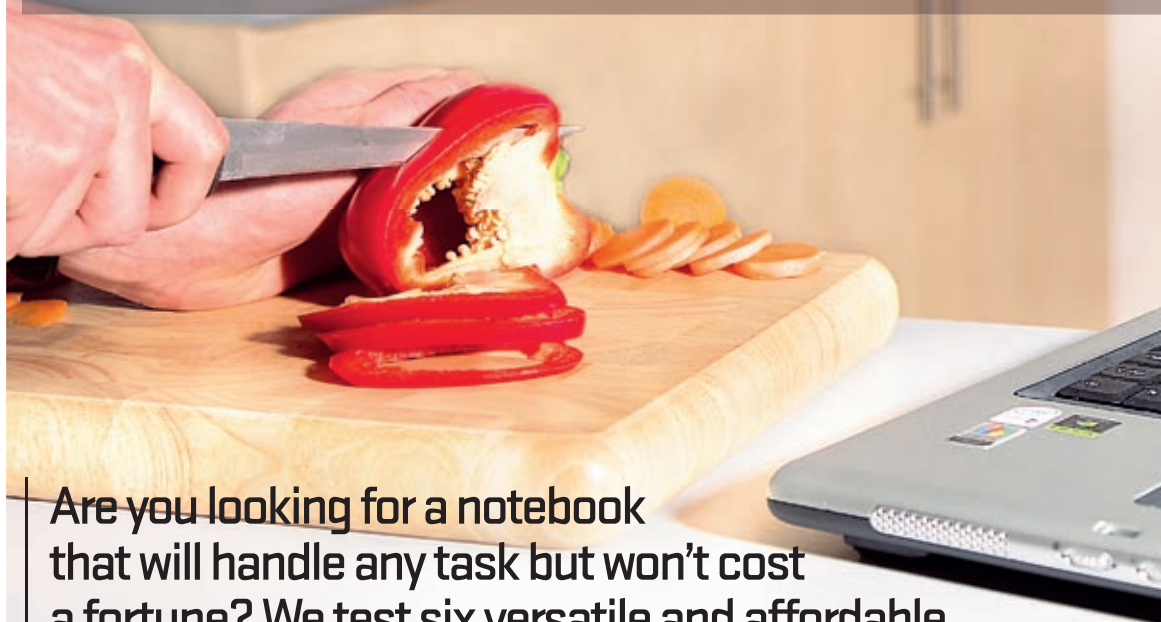
This month, we've looked at six notebooks that cost between £650 and £821 including VAT and delivery. Each has plenty of memory, lots of storage and enough processing power to tackle demanding jobs such as video editing, but does a high specification make them worth the extra cash? We've subjected all six to our usual punishing set of benchmarks to find out, and we'll help you find the best-value notebook for your budget.

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BEST-VALUE NOTEBOOKS



Are you looking for a notebook that will handle any task but won't cost a fortune? We test six versatile and affordable models that have something to offer everyone

Choosing a... Notebook

Whatever you can afford to pay, you'll get the most for your money if you think carefully about what you need from a notebook. For example, there's little point in splashing out on a powerful processor and graphics chip if you'll only ever use your computer for a bit of casual web browsing. Before you buy, think about what you and other members of your family need, then choose a notebook that will keep everyone happy.

POWER SURGE

Modern notebook computers have a surprising amount of processing power. All the notebooks tested here have dual-core processors that help them perform two demanding tasks at once quickly. Each performs better in Windows than our desktop Athlon 64 3500+ reference computer. All six notebooks come with 1GB of RAM, which is plenty for everyday Windows use.

Although most notebooks perform well in Windows, not all of them come with a dedicated 3D processor. Computers with an integrated graphics chip, such as the MSI Megabook M662 Pro Plus, lack the power required to run modern 3D games. An entry-level graphics processor such as the Nvidia GeForce Go 7300 fitted to the Asus and Acer notebooks will let you play some 3D

games, but only at reduced detail or resolution settings. If you plan to play games, you'll need to pay more for a notebook with a powerful graphics chip, such as the GeForce Go 7600 in Evesham's Quest A425.

KEY ISSUES

You can't upgrade a notebook's screen, so it's vital that you get a good one. All the models in this test have a 15.4in widescreen display, which is great for watching DVDs and working on two documents side-by-side. Most of the notebooks come with a reflective glossy display. These produce strong contrast and bright colours, so they're ideal for watching films or playing games, but they are prone to distracting reflections in brightly lit rooms. Other screens, such as the one fitted to PC Nextday's Zoostorm 53-5501, have a matt finish, which you may find better if you work with images or documents such as spreadsheets.

You should also make sure that your notebook has a decent keyboard and pointing device. To be comfortable, keys should be evenly spaced and the keyboard surround shouldn't get too hot during use. A poor keyboard layout can prove frustrating, particularly for touch-typists. All the models here have a touch pad that lets you move the cursor with your fingertip, but



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some are better than others. Our reviews tell you which are particularly good or bad. You can attach a USB keyboard or mouse to any of the notebooks here: both MSI's computer and the Asus F3Tc include a travel mouse in the box.

FILL IT UP

None of the notebooks in this test is particularly portable. With good-sized screens to protect, they're quite large and require a decent-sized notebook bag; two models come with one as standard. That said, the heaviest weighs only 3kg, so you won't put your back out if you do need to take it on the road.

If you want to work while travelling, or you just fancy watching DVDs around the house, choose a notebook with a long battery life. Three computers in this test lasted for more than three hours in our light-use test. This is the minimum we'd recommend if you often work away from a power socket. A fast recharge time (see box, right) can also help to keep your turnaround time to a minimum. The Acer Aspire 5633WLMi is particularly good in this respect.

VISTA POINT

Even if you've only just started your research into buying a notebook, you'll probably be aware that Microsoft has just released its new Windows Vista operating system. To learn more about Vista, see our feature on page 132. Sony's Vaio

VGN-FE41E is the only notebook in this review that came with Vista installed, but PC Nextday will be installing Vista on the Zoostorm when it is on sale. Other manufacturers are participating in Microsoft's Express Upgrade programme, so you can buy a self-installed upgrade to Vista for a nominal sum. If you decide to upgrade, *Upgrade Workshop* on page 159 will help you through the process.

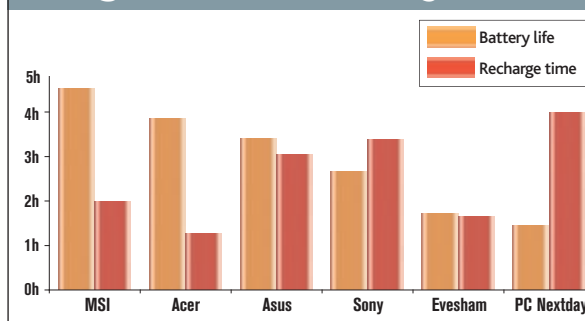
It's also worth considering the software that comes bundled with a notebook. While a good software package can't make up for a poor notebook, it can help you decide between two otherwise similar computers. Anti-virus software and a DVD-burning package are essential if you

don't already have them, and you may find some basic image-editing software useful. Our table on page 76 shows exactly what software is included with each computer.

ROOM FOR ONE MORE?

When you buy a notebook, it's particularly important that you're happy with any components that are hard or impossible to replace, such as the processor, screen and keyboard. It's usually easy to add more memory at a later date, but choosing a notebook with a free memory slot will make this more cost-effective. Our table on page 76 shows how many free slots you'll find in each notebook.

Charge! Notebook recharge times compared



A good battery life is important if you travel a lot, but it's no use if the computer takes forever to recharge. This graph shows each notebook's battery life in orange, with the time it takes to recharge (while in use) in red. The Acer and MSI notebooks can both spend much longer away from mains power than on it, whereas the Sony and PC Nextday PCs must spend most of their time plugged in.



ACER Aspire 5633WLMi



£649 inc VAT and delivery



Acer's Aspire 5630 isn't as smart as the Sony Vaio (opposite), but it's one of the better-looking notebooks here and a bargain at this price.

FEATURES

The Aspire's unusual silvery green colour isn't our favourite. Although it's quite large, it's reasonably thin and not too heavy. The good keyboard has a sensible layout and additional media and short-cut buttons are positioned around the edges. Usefully, there's a dedicated € key. The base remains cool even during heavy use, making it comparatively comfortable to have on your lap.

The reflective 15.4in widescreen display is the best here, with an evenly lit and crisp picture. It's not the brightest, but its contrast is good. The lid is very flexible but the screen panel seems to be well protected from pressure. Above it is a 1.3-megapixel camera.

PERFORMANCE

The Aspire's graphics processor can't match the Evesham Quest A425's Nvidia GeForce Go 7600 or the PC Nextday's ATI Radeon Mobility X1600. It isn't really suitable if you intend to play games, but it's OK for older titles and is capable of running Vista's Aero interface.

Although it's the cheapest notebook in this test, the Aspire 5630 achieved the best overall score in the *Shopper* application benchmarks. Its battery was also very impressive, lasting for nearly four hours in our light-use test, and recharging to 95 per cent of its capacity in just one hour 16 minutes, which is perfect for a quick lunchtime turnaround in the office.

VERDICT

This affordable notebook is easily a match for several of the more expensive models. It has a great screen, plenty of storage and is fast in Windows. Although it isn't highly portable, it's not too heavy and has a good battery. It's excellent value for money if you don't plan to play modern games.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Good Windows and battery performance
- ✓ Comfortable to use
- ✗ Not great for gaming

GENERAL-PURPOSE NOTEBOOK Intel Core 2 Duo T5500, 1GB RAM, 120GB disk, Nvidia GeForce Go 7300 graphics, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 15.4in widescreen LCD, 2.7kg
PART CODE LX.AG50J.169
SUPPLIER www.laptopsdirect.co.uk
DETAILS www.acer.co.uk



ASUS F3Tc



£699 inc VAT and delivery

This is one of two notebooks in this test with an AMD processor. It has a tasteful design and is made of high-quality, well-coordinated plastics, but it is disappointing in many ways.

FEATURES

This notebook's keyboard makes a great first impression, with a good feel to the keys and a decent amount of travel. The layout is perfect and typing feels very natural, but we found it too easy to brush the touch pad accidentally. Even worse, the notebook's surfaces quickly become very hot under the right wrist and at certain points on the underside.

The lid is easy to flex, which causes the screen panel to move slightly within its frame. Although the hinges are stiff, the lid can move a few degrees without encountering resistance, so it may wobble during a bumpy train ride. There's a hardware on/off switch for wireless networking, and this is one of two notebooks here with Bluetooth fitted as standard.

PERFORMANCE

The F3Tc's Turion 64 X2 TL-52 processor has a slightly lower clock speed than the Intel Core 2 Duo T5500 used by four of the notebooks in this test. It also achieved lower scores in our applications test, especially in the processor-intensive video-encoding test, where it scored 151 compared to the Acer Aspire's 179.

Both the Asus and Acer notebooks have a GeForce Go 7300 graphics processor with 128MB of memory, but Acer has configured its notebook to devote more system memory to graphics when required. This helped it perform marginally better in our Doom 3 benchmark, but it's still not really suitable for gaming. Its large battery lasted for three hours and 24 minutes but took three hours to recharge.

VERDICT

The F3Tc costs more than the Aspire 5633, but it doesn't perform as well. Its twitchy touch pad and uncomfortably hot surfaces make it frustrating to use at times.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Tasteful design
- ✗ Poor 2D performance; not ideal for games
- ✗ Large battery adds weight; gets hot in use

GENERAL-PURPOSE NOTEBOOK AMD Turion 64 X2 TL-52, 1GB RAM, 120GB disk, Nvidia GeForce Go 7300 graphics, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 15.4in widescreen LCD, 3.0kg
PART CODE F3Tc-AP013M
SUPPLIER Platinum Solutions 020 7636 6500
DETAILS <http://uk.asus.com>



MSI Megabook M662 Pro Plus



£699 inc VAT and delivery

MSI's Megabook M662 comes with some useful extras and a great battery, but it's quite frustrating to use.

FEATURES

MSI supplies its notebook with a basic soft case and a comfortable travel mouse. Although no bigger than the other notebooks here, the Megabook is the only one with a numeric keypad. However, the keyboard has been shrunk to make room for it, resulting in some irritating layout changes. The worst of these is a tiny right-hand Shift key, which is easy to miss. This and an over-sensitive touch pad make it too easy to move the cursor accidentally while typing and insert text in the wrong place.

The Megabook's chassis looks dated, but it's capable of running Windows Vista. Both the base and lid are very flexible, but the hinges are fairly stiff. The base remains quite cool in use, and a USB TV tuner is included.

PERFORMANCE

This is the only notebook here without a dedicated graphics processor, so it wasn't able to complete our Doom 3 benchmark. Because the integrated graphics chip uses some system memory, the Megabook lagged behind the Sony and Acer notebooks in our image-manipulation and multiple-application tests. Even so, it recorded a respectable overall score of 128 in our application benchmarks.

The Megabook has a large battery that powered the notebook for an impressive four-and-a-half hours in our light-use test, and recharged to 95 per cent of its capacity in two hours. Although the battery adds weight, this notebook is still one of the lightest in this test.

VERDICT

The Megabook has a great battery and performs well in Windows, but it's uninspiring to look at and no use for gaming. The keyboard is also disappointing.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Great battery life
- ✓ Decent Windows performance
- ✗ Terrible keyboard layout; no good for gaming

GENERAL-PURPOSE NOTEBOOK Intel Core 2 Duo T5500, 1GB RAM, 100GB disk, Intel Graphics Media Accelerator 950 graphics, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 15.4in widescreen LCD, 2.7kg
PART CODE M662 PRO PLUS
SUPPLIER www.meshcomputers.com
DETAILS www.msicomputer.co.uk



PC NEXTDAY Zoostorm 53-5501

★★★★

£700 inc VAT and delivery

PC Nextday's Zoostorm 53-5501 arrived with Windows XP Media Center Edition (MCE) installed, but PC Nextday assures us that customers will get it with Windows Vista.

FEATURES

The 53-5501 has a similar specification to the Acer Aspire 5633WLMi, but includes a TV tuner. Its non-reflective screen is fine for films and TV programmes, but despite having a subwoofer, the speakers aren't great.

This notebook looks pretty bland. It has a small, sensitive touch pad that is hard to trigger by mistake, but the buttons seem rather weakly sprung. The keyboard layout places the function button in the bottom left-hand corner, which is annoying if you use short cuts, and the keys don't click firmly when pushed. The left side of the chassis heats up in use.

PERFORMANCE

The 53-5501 uses the same processor and has the same amount of memory as Acer's Aspire, but its Windows performance was disappointing. It performed well in our video-encoding test, but lagged behind the other notebooks in disk-intensive tasks such as our image-editing and multitasking tests. The cause of its poor performance is the Western Digital Scorpio hard disk, which was 12.5 per cent slower than the Acer Aspire's Seagate disk when reading small files in our standard hard disk benchmark.

Fortunately, the ATI graphics processor helps to give it credible 3D performance. It ran our Doom 3 test at 27.5fps and is the only one of the four cheaper notebooks here that can run modern 3D games. Sadly, the battery lasted only 87 minutes.

VERDICT

The Zoostorm performs well in 3D and includes a TV tuner, making it a decent choice if you want a notebook for entertainment use. Its case is not as good as those of the Acer or Sony notebooks, though, and its Windows performance and battery life are disappointing.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Good gaming performance
- ✗ Disappointing Windows performance
- ✗ Short battery life

GENERAL-PURPOSE NOTEBOOK Intel Core 2 Duo T5500, 1GB RAM, 120GB disk, ATI Mobility Radeon X1600 graphics, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 15.4in widescreen LCD, 2.8kg
PART CODE 53-5501
SUPPLIER sales@pcnextday.co.uk
DETAILS www.pcnextday.co.uk



SONY Vaio VGN-FE41E

★★★★★

£800 inc VAT and delivery



The Vaio VGN-FE41E looks great and comes with Microsoft's Windows Vista installed. It uses the Home Premium version, which includes Windows Media Center.

FEATURES

This is the first computer we've reviewed that comes with Windows Vista installed.

The Vaio's design is a cut above the rest. Its base is a lovely light graphite colour, and the details and lettering make it look classy. Its keyboard is unusual, with square, flat keys that look widely spaced. The keys take a little getting used to, but they are a good size and sensibly arranged. The screen feels well protected, but the latch doesn't operate automatically; you need to engage it manually if you want to hold the screen shut.

The Vaio is supplied with an unusually good software bundle that includes applications for video-, audio- and image-editing. The notebook has only three USB ports, though.

PERFORMANCE

The Core 2 Duo T5500 processor powered the Vaio to some decent scores in our application benchmarks. It performed faster in our image-editing test than the similarly specified Acer Aspire, and almost matched it elsewhere, ending up with the second-best overall score.

There's currently no patch enabling Doom 3 to run under Windows Vista, so before we could run our Doom 3 test we had to install XP on the Vaio. It produced 13.7fps, so it's capable of playing modern games at reduced detail settings. The battery lasted for an acceptable two hours 40 minutes in our test, but it takes a tedious three hours 23 minutes to recharge.

VERDICT

The Vaio combines decent Windows and 3D performance with a welcome dash of style. Although its battery life isn't the best, it looks and feels great and comes with an excellent software bundle.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Good Windows performance
- ✓ Stylish, modern-looking chassis
- ✓ Comprehensive software bundle

GENERAL-PURPOSE NOTEBOOK Intel Core 2 Duo T5500, 1GB RAM, 120GB disk, Nvidia GeForce Go 7400 graphics, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 15.4in widescreen LCD, 2.8kg
PART CODE VGN-FE41E
SUPPLIER www.play.com
DETAILS www.sony.co.uk



EVESHAM Quest A425

★★★★★

£821 inc VAT and delivery

Evesham's Quest A425 has the most powerful graphics processor in this group, making it a good choice if you need to play games.

FEATURES

This is the only notebook in this test with a fingerprint scanner, so you can easily log into Windows without typing a password. Despite costing more than the other notebooks here, the A425 has a smaller 100GB hard disk. Unless you have a large collection of music or videos, though, you should still find this plenty.

The lid hinges feel a little too loose, and the lid itself feels very flexible. Pressure from behind the lid causes the screen to discolour, suggesting that it's not very well protected, so you'd need a good bag. The screen is bright and evenly lit, with a reflective coating that enhances movies and games.

The keyboard's function button is at the bottom left, but otherwise the layout and size of the keys is sensible. The keys feel a little stiff, though, so you need to type quite firmly. After a while the area under your right wrist becomes uncomfortably hot.

PERFORMANCE

With a powerful graphics processor, the A425 managed an impressive 48.9fps in our Doom 3 test, making it a great choice for playing 3D games. Although its AMD processor has the highest clock speed in this group, its results in the *Shopper* benchmarks weren't the best. It scored 123 overall, which was a little way behind the Sony, Acer and MSI notebooks.

Lasting just under one hour and 45 minutes, the Quest's battery won't survive long enough to watch a film or get any serious work done away from mains power.

VERDICT

The Quest's powerful graphics chip makes it a great choice if you need a reasonably priced notebook for playing games. With poor Windows performance and a disappointing battery, though, it's not a good buy otherwise.

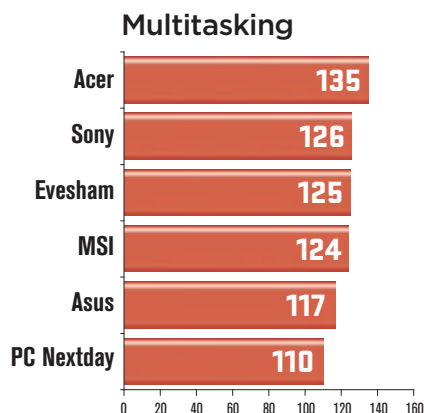
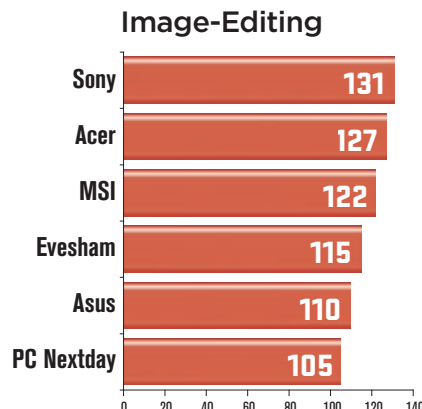
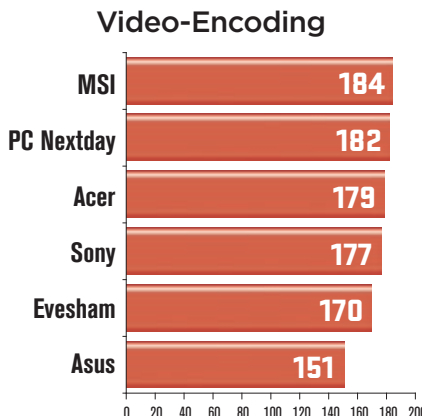
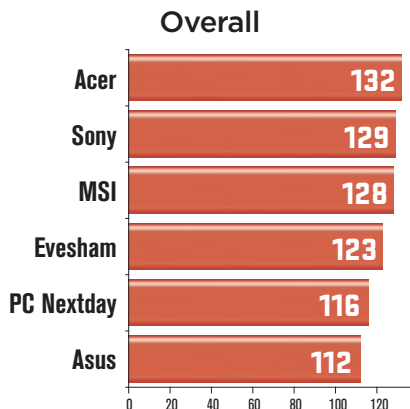
SUMMARY

- ✓ Great 3D performance
- ✓ Good warranty
- ✗ Underwhelming 2D performance and battery

GENERAL-PURPOSE NOTEBOOK AMD Turion 64 X2 TL-56, 1GB RAM, 100GB disk, Nvidia GeForce Go 7600 graphics, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 15.4in widescreen LCD, 2.6kg
PART CODE A425
SUPPLIER Evesham 08701 609500
DETAILS www.evesham.com

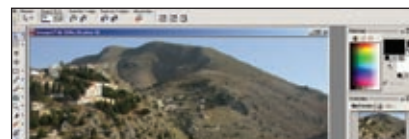
BENCHMARKS

2D Performance Shopper application tests



Computer Shopper's 2D benchmarks are designed to show how PCs stand up to the toughest tasks Windows can throw at them. Today's PCs have no problem running office applications such as Word and Excel, so we have chosen to focus our tests on areas where you could experience difficulties.

There are four scripts. Encoding a video to MPEG2 format is an extremely processor-intensive task that anyone interested in transferring home videos to DVD will have to tackle. Our image-editing test simulates a session of photo enhancement using Paint Shop Pro X, culminating with the composition of a panorama from a set of snaps. In our third test, a set of audio files is ripped to MP3 format. Finally, the multitasking test tests

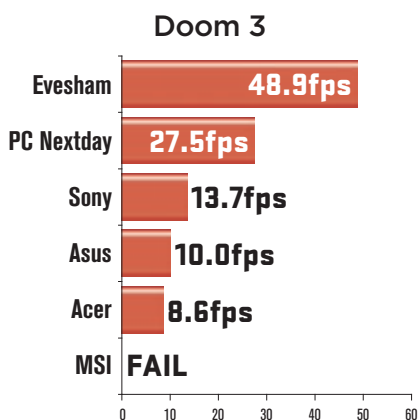


SETTINGS We run our application tests at the notebook's native resolution in 32-bit colour
WEB www.computershopper.co.uk

the real-life benefits of Hyper-Threaded and dual-core processors. This test compresses a DVD for playback on a Pocket PC at the same time as running our image-editing test.

Figures are relative to a reference Evesham Athlon 64 3500+, which scores 100 in all tests.

3D Performance Doom 3

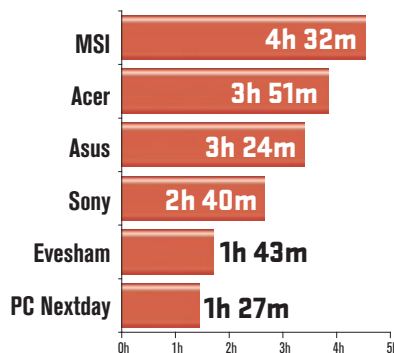


SETTINGS 1,024x768 resolution, high quality, 4x AA **WEB** www.doom3.com

Our Doom 3 benchmark tests whether a PC has the power needed to play cutting-edge 3D games with ease. We've made the standard test harder, by including more outdoor scenes in it.

A good score here indicates that a PC should cope with any graphically intense 3D game coming on to the market today.

Battery life Run time



Our battery test involves light browser use with the display at its middle brightness setting.

Labs verdict Best-value notebooks

This test shows that spending more money on a notebook doesn't automatically make it better. Acer's Aspire is a case in point. It may be the cheapest notebook in this test, but it feels well made and is comfortable to use for long sessions. Its battery lasts long enough for you to get some work done between charges, and it's the most powerful notebook here for Windows tasks. It's perfect for anyone on a tight budget, and wins our Budget Buy award.

If you have a little more to spend and you fancy playing some games, Evesham's Quest A425 is the one to choose. It has a powerful 3D processor, but it's not so great for other uses. Sony's Vaio can't match the Quest for playing games, but it's a much nicer computer to use and looks far more stylish. It performs strongly in Windows applications, comes with Windows Vista installed and has a worthwhile software bundle. It's our Best Buy.



SONY
Vaio VGN-FE41E
 ★★★★★



ACER
Aspire 5633WLMi
 ★★★★★



BEST-VALUE NOTEBOOKS

	BUDGET BUY				BEST BUY	
MANUFACTURER	ACER	ASUS	MSI	PC NEXTDAY	SONY	EVESHAM
Model	Aspire 5633WLMi	F3Tc	Megabook M662 Pro Plus	Zoostorm 53-5501	Vaio VGN-FE41E	Quest A425
Rating	★★★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Processor	Intel Core 2 Duo T5500	AMD Turion 64 X2 TL-52	Intel Core 2 Duo T5500	Intel Core 2 Duo T5500	Intel Core 2 Duo T5500	AMD Turion 64 X2 TL-56
Speed	1.66GHz	1.6GHz	1.66GHz	1.66GHz	1.66GHz	1.8GHz
Memory installed	1GB	1GB	1GB	1GB	1GB	1GB
Memory slots (free)	2 (1)	2 (0)	2 (1)	2 (1)	2 (0)	2 (1)
Max memory	4GB	2GB	2GB	2GB	2GB	2GB
BIOS	Phoenix	AMI	AMI	Insyde	Phoenix	AMI
Dimensions (HxWxD)	40x360x271mm	47x367x287mm	38x359x278mm	42x361x258mm	41x366x275mm	38x360x263mm
Weight	2.7kg	3.0kg	2.7kg	2.8kg	2.8kg	2.6kg
Sound	RealTek HD	RealTek HD	RealTek HD	RealTek HD	SigmaTel HD	RealTek HD
Pointing device	Touch pad	Touch pad	Touch pad	Touch pad	Touch pad	Touch pad
DISPLAY						
Screen size	15.4in widescreen LCD	15.4in widescreen LCD	15.4in widescreen LCD	15.4in widescreen LCD	15.4in widescreen LCD	15.4in widescreen LCD
Graphics adaptor	Nvidia GeForce Go 7300	Nvidia GeForce Go 7300	Intel Graphics Media Accelerator 950	ATI Mobility Radeon X1600	Nvidia GeForce Go 7400	Nvidia GeForce Go 7600
Graphics outputs	D-sub, S-video	D-sub, DVI, S-video	D-sub, S-video	DVI, S-video	D-sub, S-video	DVI, S-video
Graphics memory	128MB dedicated	128MB dedicated	224MB shared	256MB dedicated	64MB dedicated	256MB dedicated
Native resolution	1,280x800	1,280x800	1,280x800	1,280x800	1,280x800	1,280x800
STORAGE						
Hard disk (available)	120GB (107GB)	120GB (108GB)	100GB (91GB)	120GB (112GB)	120GB (102GB)	100GB (89GB)
Optical drive	DVD+/-RW +/-DL	DVD+/-RW +/-DL	DVD+/-RW +/-DL	DVD+/-RW +/-DL	DVD+/-RW +/-DL	DVD+/-RW +/-DL
Optical drive speeds	Lite-on SSM-8515S (8X DVD+R, 8X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 4X DVD+R DL, 4X DVD-R DL, 5X DVD-RAM, 24X CD-R, 24X CD-RW, 8X DVD-ROM, 24X CD-ROM)	LG GSA-T10N (8X DVD+R, 8X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 4X DVD+R DL, 4X DVD-R DL, 5X DVD-RAM, 24X CD-R, 16X CD-RW, 8X DVD-ROM, 24X CD-ROM)	Philips SDVD 8821 (8X DVD+R, 8X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 4X DVD+R DL, 6X DVD-R DL, 5X DVD-RAM, 24X CD-R, 24X CD-RW, 8X DVD-ROM, 24X CD-ROM)	TSST SN-S082D (8X DVD+R, 8X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 6X DVD+R DL, 4X DVD-R DL, 5X DVD-RAM, 24X CD-R, 24X CD-RW, 8X DVD-ROM, 24X CD-ROM)	Matshita UJ-850S (8X DVD+R, 8X DVD-R, 6X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 2.4X DVD+R DL, 24X CD-R, 10X CD-RW, 8X DVD-ROM, 24X CD-ROM)	Sony DW-Q520A (8X DVD+R, 8X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 4X DVD-RW, 4X DVD+R DL, 4X DVD-R DL, 24X CD-R, 24X CD-RW, 8X DVD-ROM, 24X CD-ROM)
PORTS AND EXPANSION						
USB2 ports	4	4	4	4	3	4
FireWire ports	None	1	1	1	1	1
Infrared port	No	No	No	No	No	No
Bluetooth	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Networking	10/100, 802.11a/b/g	10/100/1,000, 802.11a/b/g	10/100/1,000, 802.11b/g	10/100, 802.11a/b/g	10/100, 802.11a/b/g	10/100/1,000, 802.11b/g
PC Card slots	1x CardBus	1x ExpressCard/54	1x CardBus	1x ExpressCard/54	1x ExpressCard/34, 1x CardBus	1x ExpressCard/54, 1x CardBus
Modem	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legacy ports	None	None	None	None	None	None
Memory card reader	SD, MMC, MS Pro	SD, MMC, MS Pro	SD, MMC, MS Pro	SD, MMC, MS Pro	MS Duo/Pro	SD, MMC, MS Pro, xD, SM
Other ports	Optical S/PDIF	Optical S/PDIF	Optical S/PDIF	Optical S/PDIF	Optical S/PDIF	Optical S/PDIF
MISCELLANEOUS						
Carrying case	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Direct CD control	No	No	No	No	No	No
Operating system	Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005	Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005	Windows XP Professional	Windows Vista Home Premium	Windows Vista Home Premium	Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005
Operating system restore option	Restore partition	Restore partition, restore disc	Restore partition, restore disc	Restore partition	Restore partition	Windows CD and restore partition
Software included	CyberLink PowerDVD 10, CyberLink PowerProducer, NTI CD-Maker, Norton AntiVirus, Acer Arcade	Norton Internet Suite, Nero OEM Suite 6, PowerDVD ASUSDVD	CyberLink Power Producer Suite 2 gold, PowerDVD, PowerDirector 3, Power2Go 3	Nero Express 7, CyberLink PowerDVD 7	Adobe Photoshop Elements 5, Adobe Premiere Elements 3, Adobe Acrobat Standard 8, Norton Internet Security 2007, SonicStageCP 4.2, SonicStage Mastering Studio 2.3, DVgate Plus 2.3, VAIO Edit Components 6.0, WinDVD 8.0 for VAIO, Easy Media Creator 9, Click to DVD 2.6	BullGuard Internet Security Suite 7, Sonic DVD Media Creator 9, Microsoft Works 8.5
Other standard accessories	Built-in 1.3-megapixel webcam	Travel mouse, built-in 1.3-megapixel webcam	Travel mouse, built-in 1.3-megapixel webcam, MSI Mega Sky 580 USB DVB-T TV Tuner	Integrated TV Tuner	Built-in 1.3-megapixel webcam	Built-in 1.3-megapixel webcam, fingerprint reader
Optional extras (inc VAT)	None	Spare battery £99, upgrade to three-year warranty £105	6-cell battery £54, 9-cell battery £65	9-cell battery £50	Port replicator VGP-PRFE1 £150, standard battery £130, long-life battery £253, 2-year warranty extension £170	None
BUYING INFORMATION						
Company founded	1976	1989	1986	1993	1946	1983
Employees	6,000	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	162,000	418
Tech support staff	160	12	8	16	40	82
Tech support times	9am-5pm Mon-Fri	8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri	9am-5pm Mon-Fri	9am-6pm Mon-Fri	8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri	9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5.30pm Sat
Parts and labour warranty	One year RTB	Two years collect and return	One year onsite, one year RTB	One year RTB	One year RTB	Two years onsite, third year RTB
Price inc VAT	£649 inc VAT and delivery	£699 inc VAT and delivery	£699 inc VAT and delivery	£700 inc VAT and delivery	£800 inc VAT and delivery	£821 inc VAT and delivery
Price ex VAT	£552	£595	£595	£596	£681	£699
Details	www.acer.co.uk	http://uk.asus.com/	www.msicomputer.co.uk	www.pcnextday.co.uk	www.sony.co.uk	www.evesham.com
Supplier	www.laptopsdirect.co.uk	Platinum Solutions 020 7636 6500	www.meshcomputers.com	sales@pcnextday.co.uk	www.play.com	Evesham 08701 609500
Part code	LX.AG50J.169	F3Tc-AP013M	M662 Pro Plus	53-5501	VGN-FE41E	A425